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# **PHOSPHENES**

After Sylvius Leopold Weiss

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for solo guitar

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## **MAREK PASIECZNY**

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2016

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## PHOSPHENES

A phosphene is a phenomenon characterized by the experience of seeing light without any light actually entering the eye. The word phosphene comes from the Greek words *phôs* meaning 'light', and *phaínein* meaning 'to show or shine'. Phosphenes are often experienced as spots of light that blur or obscure the vision. However, as the phosphenes begin to fade, the vision becomes clearer and clearer until it is fully restored.

Taking this image as the structural basis for this new composition, the piece begins with an obscured presentation of Sylvius Leopold Weiss's 'Passacaglia' from his Sonata in D major (WeissSW 18.6). At the end, however, his main theme becomes clearly visible when the phosphenes have finally subsided. The result is a contemporary twist in postmodern language on the variation form, where the theme and variations are presented in reverse order.

## FORM

A set of 10 variations precede the coming of the theme, each exhibiting fragmentary visualisations of Weiss's Passacaglia, corresponding not only to his main theme, but also to the rhythmic and harmonic structures of his original variations on the theme (arpeggios, ostinato bass line).

The 10 variations are signaled by 10 repetitions of an octave g-g figure in the opening passages. This octave g-g figure returns to conclude the piece together with a pure open 5th c/g, bringing forth a sense of circular open ended-ness.

Correspondence of compositional material between variations of Phosphenes and Passacaglia:

PHOSPHENES	WEISS
A	A (theme)
B	B (based on upper voice 8ve lower than original)
C	B (based on upper voice 8ve higher than original)
D	A (no theme, introducing ostinato bass line)
E	K (arpeggio structure + ostinato bass)
F	I
G	J
H	A (theme)
I	J (ostinato bass)
J	A (theme)
THEME	A (original quote)

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## KEY

To avoid constructing too close a resemblance to Weiss's Passacaglia, the key of this composition was deliberately changed to C major (as opposed to the original key, D major). This helped to evade invoking the same colors or the same guitar patterns, but rather allowed the exploration of a broader and different spectrum of sound. Similarly, this piece was first composed on the piano in aid of seeking less idiomatic exploits of the guitar, giving rise to the use of an extended range (low C up to high B).

This piece has been commissioned by the International Guitar Festival and competition '*Guitar Masters 2016*' in Wroclaw, Poland as a set work. Phosphene is dedicated to the city of Wroclaw (Poland).



**MAREK PASIECZNY**

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## Performance note:

Harmonics have been notated as diamond noteheads at the sounding pitch. Accidentals last for the duration of the bar and only in the octave specified. The piece is approximately 5:30 min long.

# PHOSPHENES

After Sylvius Leopold Weiss

Marek Pasieczny

(\*1980)

♩ = c. 54

**A**

guitar (solo)

XII (3) *p*

⑤ = G  
⑥ = C

*pp* (eco, secco, pont. et molto regolare)

5 6

*mf* (bring out)

8va (bring out)

XII

11

*mf*

*p* *mf*

*f* (let ring) 5:2

**B**

15

*subito p* (eco) *mf* *subito p* (eco) *mf* *subito p*

19

*mf* *subito p* *f* *subito p* (molto) *f* poco rit.

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 98$  (molto regolare)

23 **C**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 98$  (molto regolare)

subito *p* *tasto* *mp* *mf* *f*

(non stac.) (let ring) (let ring) *tasto* *pont.*

28 *mp* *mf* *subito p* *subito f* *subito p* *tasto*

33 *mp* (molto) *pont.* *mf* *f*

36 **D**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 120$  (poco)

*p* (poco) *poco pont.* *mp*

41 (non arp. sempre)

*mf* *f* *poco rit.*

45 **E**  $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 132$

*subito p* (poco) *pont.* *mf* *subito p* *mf* *p*

48 **F**

*mp* *mf* *f* *pesante*

51 *subito p* (molto) *f* *ff* (let ring) *f* *golpe* (molto regolare) (poco) *8va*

55 *8va*

59 (non rit.) (let ring) pesante (3) vib.

[H] ♩ = c. 68

61 *subito p* (flat dynamics in the top repeated chords between bars 61-64) (bring out bass)

64 (poco) *f* *subito p*

67 (b) *f*

72 *mf* *f*

77

subito *p*

subito *mp*

81

*mf*

*f*

*ff* marcato

*f* (bring out bass)

84

*mp*

*mf*

*f*

88

*ff* (molto regolare)

*fff*

*ff*

non rasg.

golpe

90

*f*

*mf*

*f*

poco a poco accel. (molto)

94

*ff* pesante

molto rit.

a tempo

(let ring)

**J** ♩ = c. 108

98 *f* 1 *subito mp* *f* *subito mp* VII

100 *f* (poco)

102 X *poco rit.*

103 *f* (bring out melody)

104 ⑥ ②

106 VI ③ ④ VIII

107 *ff*

108 *subito mp* *mf*



109 *f* 10 10 10 10 10 *ff*

111 *ff* *pesante* *molto rit.*  $\text{♩} = c. 60$  (simile)

114 **THEME**  $\text{♩} = c. 54$  *f et pomposo* *poco rit.* III

117 (let ring) *subito mp* *tasto* *mf* 3 1

122 *f* *subito p* *poco accel.* *poco rit.* *mf* IV II (let ring) XII

125 *a tempo* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* (eco) (non rit.) *p* *tasto* *vib.* V